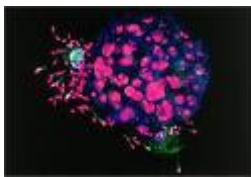


In Search of Enlightenment: Ord on Spontaneous Abortion

colinfarrelly.blogspot.com (<http://colinfarrelly.blogspot.com/2008/09/ord-on-spontaneous-abortion.html>) · by Colin Farrelly

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Ord on Spontaneous Abortion



(http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_lJNO-ZRuE1g/SL_2mNp7IoI/AAAAAAAAABC4/jqhoELDuH0w/s1600-h/human+embryo.jpg)

Last night at the RNC Mike Huckabee made this comment

(<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=94256318&ft=1&f=1102>): **"It is not above John McCain's pay grade to grasp the simple fact that human life begins at conception, and he is committed to protecting it".**

Well let's accept, for the sake of argument, that it is a simple fact that human life does begin at conception. If one really, *really* accepts this premise (and I don't), then one's whole perception of the leading causes of human death, and the most important challenges facing all of humanity, ought to be **profoundly** altered.

On this more expansive account of human life, the greatest threat to human life is not infectious disease, it is not poverty, it is not war or cancer or climate change. It is *spontaneous abortion*. More than 60% of all people are killed by spontaneous abortions, most of which occur in the first 8-10 days after conception. This amounts to 226 million embryos/people a year!

If we are to view these embryo loses as **equal** to the loss of actual human lives,

then medical research to prevent spontaneous abortions should be the #1 priority of humanity (and the Republican Party). But of course that conclusion is ridiculous. And thus those who claim that their pay grade grasps the "simple fact" that human life begins at conception should put their money where their mouth is. Forget about the war on terror, the war against spontaneous abortion should be at the top of the Bush Administration's agenda.

Toby Ord has an excellent article on the topic of spontaneous abortion in the latest issue of *AJOB*

(<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a902017076~db=all>). I wish every person who holds this "simple fact" would read his article. Here is a sample:

The argument then, is as follows. The embryo has the same moral status as an adult human (the Claim). Medical studies show that more than 60% of all people are killed by spontaneous abortion (a biological fact). Therefore, spontaneous abortion is one of the most serious problems facing humanity, and we must do our utmost to investigate ways of preventing this death—even if this is to the detriment of other pressing issues (the Conclusion).

...These numbers show that spontaneous abortion is an everyday phenomenon. A mother of three children could be expected to have also had approximately five spontaneous abortions. An embryo's survival to term is the exception rather than the norm.

It might seem surprising that these dramatic death rates for early embryos could remain unknown to the general public. However, the reason for this is that most embryo loss occurs before the pregnancy has been detected, and the woman is unaware that anything out of the ordinary has happened. The embryo simply passes out of the uterus with the next menses.

...In 6 years, the Second World War killed approximately 60 million people, whereas spontaneous abortion kills more than three times this number every year. For supporters of the Claim there is little choice but to see it as one of the world's greatest problems, if not the greatest problem.

Ord's article is required reading for all those who claim that the "life begins at conception" premise is "within their pay grade"!

Cheers,
Colin

posted by Colin Farrelly at 10:27 AM

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